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Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly on 25 January 2002 in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce

The President of the General Assembly has the honour to make the following solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce:

On 11 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/75, in which it requested Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the XIX Olympic Winter Games to be held in Salt Lake City, United States of America, from 8 to 24 February 2002, by ensuring the safe passage and participation of athletes at the Games.

The Olympic Truce, the Greek tradition of ekecheiria, was born in the eighth century B.C., serving as a hallowed principle of the Olympic Games. In 1992, the International Olympic Committee renewed this tradition by calling upon all nations to observe the Olympic Truce.

The General Assembly, recognizing the Olympic Truce as contributing to the international understanding and the maintenance of peace, adopted the landmark resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993, in which the Assembly urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce. Furthermore, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted on 8 September 2000, includes the same appeal.

The Olympic movement aspires to contribute to a peaceful future for humankind through the educational value of sport. It brings together the athletes of the world in the greatest international sports festival, the Olympic Games, and promotes world peace, friendship, solidarity and fairness, for which the United Nations also stands.

Based on these shared goals, in 1998 the International Olympic Committee decided to fly the United Nations flag at all competition sites of the Olympic Games, and the United Nations system, in particular through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is expanding its cooperation with the International Olympic Committee in various fields, such as development, humanitarian assistance, education and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

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However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 pose a grave challenge to humanity, the ideal of the United Nations and the spirit of the Olympic Games. The international community has shown strong unity and is cooperating closely to address the challenge. As the XIX Olympic Winter Games approach, even more concerted efforts and cooperation on the part of the world community are needed to ensure that the XIX Olympic Winter Games are safely and peacefully conducted.

I, therefore, solemnly appeal to all States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce and to take appropriate measures to ensure the safe passage and participation of athletes at the Salt Lake City Winter Games.